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RETAIL PRICES AND BASIC WAGE RATES - MARCH QUARTER, 1963

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The Consumer Price Index measures quarterly, for each capital city separately, the variations in prices of commodities and services as affecting a high proportion of the expenditure of wage-earner households. Commodities and services included in the index are food, clothing, drapery, home ownership, rent of privately owned and government owned houses, fuel, light, household appliances and supplies, fares, motoring, tobacco, cigarettes, beer, cinema, radio and television licenses, newspapers, postal and telephone services, hairdressing, dry cleaning, and various other items.

The various commodities and services have been combined into groups, and group indexes are available for Food, Clothing and Drapery, Housing, Household Supplies and Equipment, and Miscellaneous.

The indexes measure price movements in each city individually. They do not provide a comparison of the retail price level in any city with the retail price level of any other city. The base of the index for each capital city and for the weighted average, six capitals, is year 1952-53 = 100.0. Group indexes also have separate bases for each group.

The Consumer Price Index for Brisbane rose from 127.6 in December quarter, 1962, to 127.8 in March quarter, 1963, an increase of 0.2 per cent. compared with an increase of 0.1 per cent. in the previous quarter. Retail prices during the past twelve months have been fairly steady, the increase in the index from March quarter, 1962, to March quarter, 1963, being only 0.1 per cent.

The Food Group index showed the largest group variation during the quarter. The index number increased from 129.5 in December quarter to 130.3 in March quarter, a rise of 0.6 per cent. Higher prices for meat, eggs, and onions were partially offset by lower prices for potatoes.

The Clothing and Drapery Group index showed no change from the 117.0 recorded in the last quarter of 1962.

A slight rise of less than 0.1 per cent. was recorded in the Housing Group. The index number was 144.2, compared with 144.1 in the previous quarter.

Small price decreases for each of a number of household articles were responsible for a fall of almost 0.3 per cent. in the Household Supplies and Equipment Group. The index decreased from 112.8 in December quarter to 112.5 in March quarter.

The Miscellaneous Group index showed a slight decrease of less than 0.1 per cent., the index falling from 134.4 in December quarter to 134.3 in March quarter.

The Consumer Price Index increased in March quarter, 1963, in Perth, Brisbane, and Sydney, while there was a decrease in Melbourne and Hobart. The Adelaide index number remained unchanged. Percentage variations from the previous quarter were as follows:- Perth, +0.5; Brisbane, +0.2; Sydney, +0.1; Melbourne, -0.2; and Hobart, -0.2. The weighted average for the six capital cities showed an increase of 0.1 per cent.

Since the base year, 1952-53, the rise in the retail price level has been greatest in Hobart and Brisbane, while the smallest increase has occurred in Adelaide. Percentage increases from 1952-53 to March quarter, 1963, were as follows:- Hobart, 28.0; Brisbane, 27.8; Melbourne, 26.0; Sydney, 23.3; Perth, 22.3; and Adelaide, 21.9. The rise in the weighted average index for the six capitals was 24.5 per cent. (It should be noted that these figures merely indicate rates of price rise in the separate cities, and do not represent in any way the relative absolute price levels in the different cities.)

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE BASIC WAGE RATES

Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are reviewed by the appropriate Industrial Authorities from time to time - in some cases at fairly regular intervals and in others as a result of special applications for variation of the wage rate. The last variation made by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was an addition of 12s. to the male basic wage, with corresponding adjustments to the female and juvenile rates, and operated from 7th July, 1961.

The Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1961 abolished automatic quarterly reviews of the State basic wage, but the Industrial Commission was empowered to vary the wage after a general hearing on the applications of interested parties. On 24th May, 1961, a variation to the basic wage was made by the Commission increasing the basic wage by 4s. for males and 3s. for females, operative from 29th May, 1961. In a judgment given on 26th April, 1963, the Commission granted an application from employees' organisations for an increase in the basic wage. In accordance with the movement in the Consumer Price Index, the basic wage was increased by 2s. for adult males and 1s. 6d. for adult females, operative from 6th May, 1963.

Current Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are shown in the following table.

Basic Wage Rates - Australian Capital Cities

Capital City	Commonwealth Basic Wage			State Basic Wage		
	Males	Females	Date of Operation ^a	Males	Females	Date of Operation
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Brisbane	13 10 0	10 2 6	7.7.61	14 6 0	10 14 6	6. 5.63
Sydney	14 15 0	11 1 0	7.7.61	15 2 0	11 6 6	1. 5.63a
Melbourne	14 7 0	10 15 0	7.7.61	14 7 0	10 15 0	July, 61b
Adelaide	14 3 0	10 12 0	7.7.61	14 3 0	10 12 0	10. 7.61a
Perth	14 8 0	10 16 0	7.7.61	15 0 3	11 5 2	22. 4.63
Hobart	14 14 0	11 0 6	7.7.61	14 14 0	11 0 6	July, 61b

a From the first pay period commencing on or after the date shown.

b Most Wages Boards adopted the Commonwealth rate during July, 1961.

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14th May, 1963

Table 1 - Consumer Price Index - Total and Group Indexes - Brisbane
(Year 1952-53 = 100.0)

Period	Food	Clothing and Drapery	Housing	Household Supplies and Equipment	Miscell- aneous	All Groups
Year -						
1952-53 ..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953-54 ..	103.4	100.9	101.6	101.7	101.7	102.0
1954-55 ..	104.1	101.3	104.7	102.5	102.0	102.9
1955-56 ..	107.7	102.2	110.5	102.6	108.0	106.3
1956-57 ..	111.5	104.7	118.4	106.5	118.9	112.0
1957-58 ..	113.0	107.8	123.9	108.3	120.5	114.4
1958-59 ..	119.8	109.4	128.4	109.0	123.6	118.2
1959-60 ..	124.2	111.9	132.6	110.6	125.6	121.2
1960-61 ..	130.4	115.1	137.6	111.3	129.5	125.4
1961-62 ..	130.8	116.7	140.5	113.0	133.3	127.3
Quarter -						
1962 - March ..	131.4	116.8	140.3	113.2	134.3	127.7
June ..	129.4	116.8	141.9	113.0	134.3	127.3
September ..	129.3	116.9	143.2	113.1	134.3	127.5
December ..	129.5	117.0	144.1	112.8	134.4	127.6
1963 - March ..	130.3	117.0	144.2	112.5	134.3	127.8
Percentage Increase or Decrease (-) on Previous Quarter						
Quarter -						
1962 - March ..	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.5
June ..	-1.5	-	1.1	-0.2	-	-0.3
September ..	-0.1	0.1	0.9	0.1	-	0.2
December ..	0.2	0.1	0.6	-0.3	0.1	0.1
1963 - March ..	0.6	-	0.1	-0.3	-0.1	0.2

Table 2 - Consumer Price Index - Capital Cities
(Year 1952-53 = 100.0 for Each City and for Six Capitals)

As the base for each city is 100.0, the indexes in the table below do not indicate relative price levels as between cities, but they may be used to compare relative price movements in the various cities.

Period	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average, Six Capitals
Year -							
1952-53 ..	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1953-54 ..	101.6	102.0	102.0	102.3	103.0	105.0	102.0
1954-55 ..	102.3	102.0	102.9	103.5	105.2	104.9	102.6
1955-56 ..	105.7	108.1	106.3	106.9	107.9	110.2	106.9
1956-57 ..	112.9	114.0	112.0	111.1	112.9	116.9	113.1
1957-58 ..	114.5	114.4	114.4	111.9	113.6	117.0	114.2
1958-59 ..	115.3	116.6	118.2	114.5	114.7	118.7	116.0
1959-60 ..	117.8	120.0	121.2	118.0	116.9	120.8	118.9
1960-61 ..	122.1	125.9	125.4	122.9	121.2	127.5	123.8
1961-62 ..	122.6	126.3	127.3	122.5	121.6	128.1	124.3
Quarter -							
1962 - March ..	122.4	125.9	127.7	122.1	121.5	127.5	124.1
June ..	122.3	125.9	127.3	121.9	121.8	127.5	124.0
September ..	122.7	126.2	127.5	121.9	122.1	127.6	124.3
December ..	123.2	126.2	127.6	121.9	121.7	128.2	124.4
1963 - March ..	123.3	126.0	127.8	121.9	122.3	128.0	124.5